## NORTHWEST AREA EDUCATION AGENCY

# **Reorganization Plan**

Required by Iowa Code Chapter 275

## **July, 2012**

Name	<b>Director District</b>	Schools Represented*
Keith Zylstra	1	Central Lyon
		George-Little Rock
		Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn
		Rock Valley
		Sibley-Ocheyedan
		West Lyon
Adella Hulstein	2	Akron-Westfield
		Boyden-Hull
		Sheldon
		Sioux Center
		West Sioux
Roger Brinkert	3	Cherokee
_		Kingsley-Pierson
		Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn
		Remsen-Union
		River Valley
		South O'Brien
		Woodbury Central
Dr. Tom Bjorge	4	Hinton
		Le Mars
		MOC-Floyd Valley
Creston Schubert	5	Ar-We-Va
		Aurelia
		Battle Creek-Ida Grove
		Denison
		Galva-Holstein
		Maple Valley
		Schleswig
Tom Bruegger	6	Anthon-Oto
		Charter Oak-Ute
		Lawton-Bronson
		Sgt. Bluff-Luton
		Westwood
		West Monona
		Whiting
		Sioux City Precincts 20 & 26
Patricia Sutherland	7	Sioux City Precincts 1, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 17, 18, 19
Glenda Den Herder	8	Sioux City Precincts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
Dr. Robert Rice	9	Sioux City Precincts 12, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28

\*Before Redistricting mid-2012

Administrator: Dr. Timothy Grieves

Secretary to the Board: Gloria Miller

**Iowa Code section 275.1, unnumbered paragraph 2, 1999,** states that, "...The area education agency boards shall develop detailed studies and surveys of the school districts within the area education agency and all adjacent territory for the purpose of providing for reorganization of school districts in order to effect more economical operation and the attainment of higher standards of education in the schools. The plans shall be revised periodically to reflect reorganizations which may have taken place in the area education agency and adjacent territory." The purposes of this publication are to comply with those mandates relative to reorganization planning, to provide assistance to the officials and citizens of school districts contemplating school district reorganization, and to assist the area education agency board of directors in the event it is presented a reorganization petition.

The plan is intended to provide general guidance to the AEA Board of Directors as it acts upon reorganization petitions. The AEA Plan contemplates that it may be augmented from time to time through the addition of studies and surveys conducted by the AEA or through the assistance of the Department of Education or other educational consultants. The plan will be altered by subsequent reorganization activity. Further, factors relevant to the statutory standards including matters outside the scope of this plan may serve as a basis for AEA Board decision making on a proposed reorganization. The provisions of this Plan are just one consideration and not the exclusive consideration(s) for the Board in acting upon prospectively filed reorganization petitions. The Board reserves the right to base its future actions upon conditions as they develop and upon new information as it becomes available.

Plan adopted by VWAEA Board of Directors	8-20-2012
PLAN TRANSHITTED TO DIRECTOR OF 10WA DEPAITHENT OF EDUCATION	
	8-21-2012

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#### Chapter 1

#### **Code Summary**

The purpose of this chapter is to assist those who read and use this publication by summarizing the provisions of Chapter 275 of the Code of Iowa that relate to the mandated area education agency (AEA) reorganization plans. However, it is not intended for reading of this narrative to take the place of direct examination of the Code or consultation with an attorney. The first part of the chapter offers general background about the contents of Code Chapter 275, and the next three sections summarize portions of Code Chapter 275 that most specifically relate to the AEA reorganization plans. The fifth part lists the titles of the sections of Code Chapter 275 that most directly address the reorganization plan.

#### General Background.

Chapter 275 of the Code of Iowa, along with a few minor references in other chapters of the Code, address the topic of school district reorganization. The terms reorganization, consolidation, and merger seem to be used interchangeably; although reorganization is in the Iowa Code chapter title and it is the most common. The word reorganization is used in this publication.

On July 1, 1975, the 15 area education agencies replaced the county boards of education, and they inherited the school district reorganization governance role. The AEA responsibilities for reorganization can be placed into two broad categories. The first includes the area reorganization plan, and the second is the governance of the petition process. It is important to note that the AEAs have no responsibilities or capacities for initiating the reorganization process, or in any way causing a reorganization. The decision to start a reorganization effort through a petition is a decision of the local district residents. The eventual reorganization election decision is also within the realm of local district voters. The AEA's role in the reorganization process is to govern the activities that take place from the submission of the reorganization petition through the reorganization election. The AEA has some post-reorganization responsibilities, but they are more "housekeeping" in nature.

The Iowa Code contains three general methods for school districts to change their boundary lines. The first, and predominant method, is the petition process in Iowa Code Chapter 275. The others are the dissolution method embodied in Iowa Code Sections 275.51 through 275.56, and the concurrent action method of changing boundaries as cited in Section 274.37. The AEA has no authority for dissolution, but concurrent action by two local school boards to change their boundaries may be disapproved by the respective AEA board or boards of directors.

Iowa Code Chapter 275 can be categorized into two broad areas, plus numerous lesser topics. The first is the AEA reorganization planning component, and the second is the reorganization petition process. Among the other topics in the chapter are the school dissolution process, school redistricting following decennial census, and changes in

director district boundaries and numbers. This publication is limited to the AEA reorganization planning.

Three general concepts come together as the AEAs develop and use their reorganization plans:

- Iowa Code Chapter 275 begins with the mandate that area education agencies develop reorganization plans. Such plans must be developed whether or not any school districts expect to reorganize, or could potentially reorganize.
- School districts initiate the reorganization effort through the petition process. The petitions may be based upon the AEA reorganization plans, or they may be different than the plans. If they are different, the petitions must request the AEA to change its plans.
- When the AEA receives petitions, it must compare the petitions to the plans. If the petitions do not comply with the plans, the AEA board shall conduct further surveys.

The terms plans, surveys, and studies are used throughout Code Chapter 275. There seems to be little distinction among them. This publication uses the terms that are associated with the concepts being described.

#### **Summary of Plan Development.**

- 1. The AEA shall develop detailed studies and surveys.
- 2. The surveys and studies shall be of the school districts within the AEA and all adjacent territory.
- 3. The plans shall be revised periodically to reflect reorganizations which may have taken place.
- 4. The scope of the studies and surveys shall include (found in Iowa Code 275.2):
  - a) the adequacy of the educational program.
  - b) pupil enrollment.
  - c) property valuation.
  - d) existing buildings and equipment.
  - e) natural community areas.
  - f) road conditions.
  - g) transportation.
  - h) economic factors.
  - i) individual attention given to the needs of students.
  - j) opportunity of students to participate in a wide variety of activities.
  - k) other matters that may bear on educational programs meeting minimum standards required by law.
- 5. The plans shall also include suggested alternate plans that incorporate the school districts in the area education agency into reorganized districts that meet the enrollment standards specified in Section 275.3. Section 275.3 lists 300 students as the minimum size for the formation of a new district. That 300 enrollment is incorporated into this planning provision, and it requires the AEA boards to suggest alternate plans for those districts under the 300 level.
- 6. The plan may include alternate plans proposed by school districts for sharing programs as an alternative to school reorganization.
- 7. In developing studies and surveys the AEA board:
  - a) shall consult with school officials and other citizens.

- b) from time to time hold public hearings.
- c) may employ research and other assistance to properly carry on its survey.
- d) shall consult with the director of the Department of Education.
- e) may request assistance from the director of the Department of Education.
- f) shall adopt and transmit completed plans to the director of the Department of Education.

#### **Summary of Petition Conforming to Plans.**

- 1. A reorganization petition shall contain a description of the area included in the proposed district.
- 2. The description shall conform to the AEA reorganization plan, or the petition shall request the plan to be changed.
- 3. It is also required that the provisions relating to studies, surveys, hearings and adoption of plans shall constitute a mandatory prerequisite to the effectuation of any proposal for district boundary change. It shall be the mandatory duty of the area education agency board to dismiss the petition if the above provisions are not complied with fully.

#### **Summary of Changing Plans.**

- 1. Following the receipt of a petition, the area education agency board shall review its plans and determine whether the petition complies with the plan.
- 2. If the plan does not comply with the petition, the board shall conduct further surveys.
- 3. If the petitions are being considered at a hearing conducted by a joint board of more than one area education agency, the joint board shall determine if the petition conforms to plans.
- 4. If the petition requests a change of plans, the joint board shall determine whether a change should be made in any or all of the plans of the AEAs affected by the petition.

References in this area education plan are to the 2011 version of the Code of Iowa. The accepted practice of Code citation is to format it as, "Iowa Code section 274.37, 2011." For purposes of brevity and readability, some Code references in this plan may specify the chapter and section numbers, without identification of the year or reference to "Iowa Code."

The following table is a list of sections of the Code that are totally or partially quoted in the plan: **274:** 37

**275:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 51, 53, 55.

#### Chapter 2

# **Records of Northwest AEA Reorganization Plans** and Activities

As noted in the preceding chapter, the development of area education agency reorganization plans, the revision of the plans, and the use of the plans during the reorganization petition process, all require certain actions to be taken by the AEAs and their boards of directors. The purpose of this chapter is to maintain a set of records that chronicles such actions by Northwest AEA<sup>1</sup>.

The records are in the form of a set of loose-leaf inserts, which may be revised as actions are taken and conditions change. Following is a list of inserts:

Table 01	Adoption of Plans and Revisions of Plans.
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Table 07	Passed Reorganization Elections.
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Table 09	Certification of Dissolution Commissions.
Table 10	Boundary Lines Changed by Concurrent Action.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Records of the original AEAs 4 & 12 are listed where appropriate.

## Record of Adoption of Plans and Revisions of Plans July 1, 1975 – 2012

#### **Iowa Code Reference:**

**Section 275.1, unnumbered paragraph 2, 2003:** "... The area education agency boards shall develop detailed studies and surveys of the school districts within the area education agency and all adjacent territory for the purpose of providing for reorganization of school districts in order to effect more economical operation and the attainment of higher standards of education in the schools. The plans shall be revised periodically to reflect reorganizations which may have taken place in the area education agency and adjacent territory."

**Record of Adoption: Northwest AEA (July 1, 2006 – Present)** 

Dates	Notes
8-20-12	Original plan <sup>2</sup>
	First revision of plan
	Second Revision of plan

Record of Adoption: Western Hills AEA 12 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2006)

Dates	Notes
10-20-80 and 6-15-87	Original plan
6-30-86 and 5-8-98	First revision
5-18-98	Second revision

**Record of Adoption: AEA 4 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2006)** 

Dates	Notes
10-20-82, 9-17-86, 9-15-99	Original plan
4-90 and 1-7-04	First revision
	Second revision

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Changes made to the plan in the future are to be labeled as "Revisions of Plan."

# Record of Assistance from the Director of the Department of Education July 1, 1975 - 2012

#### **Iowa Code Reference:**

Section 275.4, unnumbered paragraph 2, 2003: "In addition, the area education agency board shall consult with the director of the department of education in the development of surveys and plans. The director of the department of education shall provide assistance to the area education agency boards as requested and shall advise the area education agency boards concerning plans of contiguous area education agencies and the reorganization policies adopted by the state board of education."

#### **Record of Further Surveys:**

Dates	District Name	<b>Surveys Conducted</b>	Study Type
		by	
Dec. 1995	Willow	DE (G. Ghan)	Reorg & Finance Study
Dec. 1977	Hartley Paullina Primghar Sanborn Sutherland	DE	Feasibility Study
1986	East Monona	DE (G. Ghan)	Reorg Study
1986	Whiting	DE (G. Ghan)	Reorg Study
Oct. 1991	Central Lyon George Little Rock Sibley-Ocheydan	DE	Reorg Study
Oct. 1991	Paullina Primghar Sutherland	DE	Reorg & Facility Study
1993	Anthon-Oto Maple Valley	DE	Further Survey
1993	Eastwood Willow	DE	Further Survey
1995	Anthon-Oto Maple Valley	DE	Further Survey
1996	East Monona Boyer Valley, Charter Oak-Ute West Monona	DE	Reorg Study

1998	East Monona	DE (G. Ghan)	Reorg Study
	Boyer Valley		
	Charter Oak-Ute		
	West Monona		
2001	George	DE (G. Ghan)	Reorg Analysis
	Little Rock		
Nov. 2004	Ar-We-Va	DE (G. Ghan)	Sharing/Reorg
	IKM		Study
	Manning		
May 2006	Alta	DE (B. Byrd)	Feasibility Study
	Aurelia		

## Public Hearings Since July 1, 2000

#### **Iowa Code References:**

Section 275.4, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003: "In developing studies and surveys the area education agency board shall consult with the officials of school districts in the area and other citizens, and shall from time to time hold public hearings, and may employ such research and other assistance as it may determine reasonably necessary in order to properly carry on its survey and prepare definite plans of reorganization."

Section 275.5, 2003: "... Following receipt of a petition pursuant to section 275.12, the area education agency board shall review its plans and determine whether the petition complies with the plans which had been adopted by the board. If the petition does not comply with the plans which had been adopted by the board, the board shall conduct further surveys pursuant to section 275.4 prior to the date set for the hearing upon the petition. If further surveys have been conducted by the board, the board shall present the results of the further surveys at the hearing upon the petition."

#### **Record of Hearings:**

Dates	Locations	Notes
	George, Iowa	Approval of George and Little Rock
July 18, 2002		Reorganization Petition
Oct. 26, 2010 and	Anthon, Iowa	Approval of Maple Valley and Anthon-
Nov. 11, 2010		Oto Reorganization Petition
June 29, 2011	Ida Grove, Iowa	Approval of Battle Creek-Ida Grove and
		Odebolt-Arthur Reorganization Petition

Table 2-07

## Record of Passed Reorganization Elections Since July 1, 1975

<b>Effective Date</b>	Original Districts & AEA Nos.	New District & AEA No.
July 1, 1981	Hartley (4)	Hartley-Melvin (4)
	Melvin (4)	
July 1, 1985	Ocheyedan (4)	Sibley-Ocheyedan (4)
	Sibley (4)	
July 1, 1991	Hartley-Melvin (4)	Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn (4)
	Sanborn (4)	
July 1, 1993	Marcus (4)	Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn (4)
	Meriden-Cleghorn (4)	
July 1, 1993	Paullina (4)	South O'Brien (4)
	Primghar (4)	
	Sutherland (4)	
July 1, 1994	Floyd Valley (4)	MOC-Floyd Valley (4)
	Maurice-Orange City (4)	
July 1, 2003	Little Rock (4)	George-Little Rock (4)
	George (4)	
July 1, 1980	Galva (12)	Galva-Holstein (12)
	Holstein (12)	
July 1, 1981	Akron (12)	Akron-Westfield (12)
	Westfield (12)	
July 1, 1994	Battle Creek (12)	Battle Creek-Ida Grove (12)
	Ida Grove (12)	
July 1, 1992	Irwin (13)	IKM (13)
	Manilla (12)	
July 1, 1994	Dunlap (12)	Boyer Valley (13)
	Dow City-Arion (13)	
July 1, 1996	Eastwood (12)	River Valley (12)
	Willow (12)	
T. 1. 4. 2012	No. 1 V. II. OWV. E.A.	
July 1, 2012	Maple Valley (NWAEA)	Maple Valley-Anthon-Oto
	Anthon-Oto (NWAEA)	(NWAEA)

## Record of Dismissed Reorganization Petitions and Failed Reorganization Elections Since July 1, 1975

#### **Iowa Code References:**

**Section 275.15, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003:** "At the hearing, which shall be held within ten days of the final date set for filing objections, interested parties, both petitioners and objectors, may present evidence and arguments, and the area education agency board shall review the matter on its merits and within ten days after the conclusion of any hearing, shall rule on the objections and shall enter an order fixing the boundaries for the proposed school corporation as will in its judgment be for the best interests of all parties concerned, having due regard for the welfare of adjoining districts, or dismiss the petition."

**Section 275.17, 2003:** "If an area education agency board does not approve the change in boundaries of school districts in accordance with a petition, a petition describing the identical or similar boundaries shall not be filed for a period of six months following the date of the hearing or the vote of the board, whichever is later."

**Section 275.22, 2003:** "... If the majority of the votes cast by the qualified electors is in favor of the proposition, as provided in section 275.20, a new school corporation shall be organized. If the majority of votes cast is opposed to the proposition, a new petition describing the identical or similar boundaries shall not be filed for at least six months from the date of the election..."

#### **Record of Dismissed Petitions: NWAEA**

Hearing Dates	Original Districts	<b>AEA Numbers</b>
None		

#### **Record of Failed Elections: NWAEA**

<b>Election Dates</b>	Original Districts	<b>AEA Numbers</b>
Sept. 13, 2011	Battle Creek-Ida Grove	NWAEA
	Odebolt-Arthur	NWAEA

#### Record of Dismissed Petitions: AEA 4 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2005)

Hearing Dates	Original Districts	AEA Numbers
Oct. 18, 1979	Sanborn	4
	Melvin	4

Record of Failed Elections: AEA 4 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2005)

<b>Election Dates</b>	Original Districts	<b>AEA Numbers</b>
March 1980	Sibley	
	Melvin	
Sept. 11, 1984	Marcus	4
	Meriden-Cleghorn	4
June 28, 1988	Cherokee	12
	Meriden-Cleghorn	4
Nov. 24, 1992	Floyd Valley	4
	Maurice-Orange City	4

#### Record of Dismissed Petitions: AEA 12 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2005)

<b>Hearing Dates</b>	Original Districts and AEA Nos.	Actions
None		

#### Record of Failed Elections: AEA 12 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2005)

<b>Election Dates</b>	Original Districts	AEA Numbers
Oct. 18, 2005	Maple Valley Anthon-Oto	12
	Anthon-Oto	12

## Record of Certification of Dissolution Commissions Since July 1, 2003

#### **Iowa Code References:**

**Section 275.51, unnumbered paragraph 4, 2003:** "The board of the school district shall certify to the area education agency board that a commission has been formed, the names and addresses of commission members, and that the commission members represent the various geographic areas and socioeconomic factors present in the district."

**Section 275.53, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003:** "The commission shall send a copy of its dissolution proposal or shall inform the board that it cannot agree upon a dissolution proposal not later than one year following the date of the organizational meeting of the commission. . . . "

**Section 275.55, unnumbered paragraph 3, 2003:** "The proposition shall be adopted if a majority of the electors voting on the proposition approve its adoption."

#### **Certification of Commission: NWAEA**

Date	District (AEA)
None	

#### Failure of Commission to Agree: NWAEA

Date	District
Oct. 10, 2005	Ar-We-Va (NWAEA Board denied their request to join
	Heartland AEA)
Oct. 11, 2005	Ar-We-Va (Heartland Board denied their request to join
	Heartland AEA)

#### **Approval by Electors: NWAEA**

Date	Original District	Districts Receiving Territory

#### Failure of Electors to Approve: NWAEA

Date	District

#### Certification of Commission: AEAs 4 & 12 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2005)

Date	District/AEA
June 30, 2004	East Monona (12)

#### Failure of Commission to Agree: AEAs 4 & 12 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2005)

Date	District

#### **Approval by Electors: AEAs 4 & 12 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2005)**

Date	Original District	Districts Receiving Territory

#### Failure of Electors to Approve: AEAs 4 & 12 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2005)

Date	District

## Boundary Line Changes Since July 1, 1975

#### **Iowa Code References:**

Section 274.37, unnumbered paragraph 1, 2003: "The boundary lines of contiguous school corporations may be changed by the concurrent action of the respective boards of directors at their regular meetings in July, or at special meetings called for that purpose. Such concurrent action shall be subject to the approval of the area education agency board but such concurrent action shall stand approved if the said board does not disapprove such concurrent action within thirty days following receipt of notice thereof. The corporation from which territory is detached shall, after the change, contain not less than four government sections of land."

**Section 275.22, 2003:** "... If territory is excluded from the reorganized district, action pursuant to section 274.37 shall be taken prior to the effective date of reorganization..."

Territory Exclusion/Inclusion: AEA 4 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2006)

Effective Date	Excluded From	Included In
July 1, 1981	Hartley-Melvin	Sanborn
July 1, 1991	Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn	Sibley-Ocheyedan
		Sheldon
July 1, 1993	Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn	Willow
		Kingsley-Pierson
		Cherokee
July 1, 1994	MOC-Floyd Valley	Boyden-Hull

Other Concurrent Action: AEA 4 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2006)

None
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Territory Exclusion/Inclusion: AEA 12 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2006)

Effective Date	Excluded From	Included In
July 1, 1980	Galva	Aurelia
July 1, 1981	Westfield	Sioux City
July 1, 1996	Eastwood	Battle Creek-Ida Grove
		Woodbury Central
July 1, 1996	Willow	Cherokee

Other Concurrent Action: AEA 12 (July 1, 1975 – June 30, 2006)

December, 1986	Charter Oak-Ute	Exchange some land
	Denison	

Territory Exclusion/Inclusion: NWAEA (July 1, 2006 – Present)

Effective Date	Excluded From	Included In
None		

Other Concurrent Action: NWAEA (July 1, 2006 – Present)

None	

#### Chapter 3

### **Suggested Alternate Plans**

#### **Iowa Code References:**

**Section 275.2, 2003:** "... The plans shall also include suggested alternate plans that incorporate the school districts in the area education agency into reorganized districts that meet the enrollment standards specified in section 275.3 and may include alternate plans proposed by school districts for sharing programs under section 28E.9, 256.13, 280.15, 282.7, or 282.10 as an alternative to school reorganization."

Section 275.3, 2003: "No new school district shall be planned by an area education agency board nor shall any proposal for creation or enlargement of any school district be approved by an area education agency board or submitted to electors unless there reside within the proposed limits of such district at least three hundred persons of school age who were enrolled in public schools in the preceding school year. Provided, however, that the director of the department of education shall have authority to grant permission to an area education agency board to approve the formation or enlargement of a school district containing a lower school enrollment than required in this section on the written request of such area education agency board if such request is accompanied by evidence tending to show that sparsity of population, natural barriers or other good reason makes it impracticable to meet the school enrollment requirement."

Table 3-01

## List of Districts in Northwest Area Education Agency October 2011

## ENROLLMENT, 2011

DIOTRICT NAME	CERTIFIED
Akron-Westfield	ENROLLMENT
	512
Anthon-Oto	236
Ar-We-Va	291
Aurelia	258
Battle Creek-Ida Grove	647
Boyden-Hull	626
Central Lyon	715
Charter Oak-Ute	317
Cherokee	932
Denison	2,032
Galva-Holstein	433
George-Little Rock	470
Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn	627
Hinton	532
Kingsley-Pierson	468
Lawton-Bronson	622
Le Mars	2,066
Maple Valley	471
Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn	449
MOC-Floyd Valley	1,342
Remsen-Union	387
River Valley	473
Rock Valley	641
Schleswig	309
Sgt. Bluff-Luton	1,339
Sheldon	976
Sibley-Ocheyedan	731
Sioux Center	1,028
Sioux City	13,766
South O'Brien	666
West Lyon	815
West Monona	716
West Sioux	670
Westwood	544
Whiting	183
Woodbury Central	598

Table 3-02

# List of Alternate Whole-Grade Sharing Plans 2011-12

AEA	School	First Year	Grade	Grade	Partner
	District		Levels	Levels	School
			Receiving	Sending	Districts
NWAEA	Schleswig	1993		9-12	Denison
NWAEA	Denison	1993	9-12		Schleswig
NWAEA	BCIG	2008	6-8	9-12	Odebolt-
					Arthur
8	Odebolt-	2008	9-12	6-8	BCIG
	Arthur				
NWAEA	Remsen-		Some shared		St. Mary's in
	Union		classes.		Remsen
NWAEA	St. Mary's in		Some shared		Remsen-
	Remsen		classes.		Union
8	Alta	2011	9-12	6-8	Aurelia
NWAEA	Aurelia	2011	6-8	9-12	Alta
NWAEA	Galva-		9-12	6-8	Schaller-
	Holstein				Crestland
8	Schaller-		6-8	9-12	Galva-
	Crestland				Holstein

#### **Overview of Plans**

#### **OVERVIEW**

One reorganization has occurred since 2006, when Northwest AEA was formed by the merger of Western Hills AEA 12 and Area Education Agency 4. The date of the election was 2-1-2011, the name chosen was Maple Valley-Anthon Oto and the date of reorganization is 7-1-2012.

A failed attempt for a reorganization of two school districts, Battle Creek-Ida Grove and Odebolt-Arthur, occurred in September 2011. A reorganization hearing was held on June 29, 2011, with no objections filed. However, with the election on September 13, 2011, the reorganization did not pass.

Northwest Area Education Agency serves approximately 43,000 students and 35 school districts in a ten-county region. Kindergarten through twelfth grade district enrollments range from 183 students at Whiting (2011-12) to 13,766 students at Sioux City (2011-12). Coupled with continuing school financing limitations, the current trends of curriculum reform and total district transformation are forcing some districts to review their existing operations while maintaining a high quality of educational services.

Iowa Code section 275.2, 2009, in part, requires that, "The plans shall also include suggested alternate plans that incorporate the school districts in the area education agency into reorganized districts that meet the enrollment standards specified in section 275.3 and may include alternate plans proposed by school districts for sharing programs under section 28E.9, 256.13, 280.15, 282.7, or 282.10 as an alternative to school reorganization." The minimum number listed for enrollment in Section 275.3 is 300 students. Anthon-Oto (enrollment 236) and Maple Valley (enrollment 471) reorganized on 7-1-12. In addition, Northwest Area Education Agency had three districts below a certified enrollment of 300 and three more that are near:

Whiting - 183 (2011-12) Aurelia - 258 (2011-12) Ar-We-Va - 291 (2011-12) Schleswig - 309 (2011-12) Charter Oak-Ute - 317 (2011-12) Remsen-Union - 387 (2011-12)

The purposes of the overview section of this plan are to comply with the mandate relative to enrollment size as stated in Iowa Code section 275.2, 2009, to provide assistance to the officials and citizens of school districts contemplating school district reorganization, and to assist the area education agency board of directors in the event it is presented a reorganization petition. Alternate reorganization proposals have been prepared for the districts that have less than 300 students.

#### 

	School Districts	Enrollment
AEA 4	21	13,974 (includes nonpublic)
AEA 12	30	41,377 (includes nonpublic)

#### 

	School Districts	Enrollment
Northwest AEA	36	45,673

#### 

	School Districts	Enrollment
Northwest AEA	35	43,187

#### ALTERNATE PLANS

This section of the plan lists alternate plans that the AEA board of directors will consider as it acts upon reorganization petitions presented to it and as it enters the order "fixing boundary lines." These alternate plans apply to petitions presented by the districts with less than 300 students, and they will apply to districts with more than 300 students that may be included in a reorganization petition.

#### A. Overriding reorganization principles.

As the Northwest AEA board of directors works with the reorganization process it embraces three overriding principles:

- 1. School district reorganization is a local issue. The decision to begin the process by circulating a petition is the sole responsibility of the district's citizens and elected officials. The ultimate decision to vote for or against a reorganization proposal is within the realm of the registered voters of the districts involved.
- 2. The Code of Iowa, specifically Chapter 275, requires the area education agency and its board of directors to assume stated responsibilities and authorities. In general terms, those mandates relate to the development of the area education agency reorganization plan; relate to the governance of the petition process from the time of the administrator is presented with such petition, to the AEA board of directors' order to approve or disapprove an election; and relate to several other narrower responsibilities, such as the acceptance of a certification that a dissolution commission has been formed. The area education agency and its board of directors will be limited to those actions required by the Code, and to assistance that is specifically requested by the local districts which will not be in potential conflict with the mandates of the petition process.
- 3. The board of directors views the merger of school districts as the union of public business entities. The AEA encourages the local residents and boards of directors to determine if reorganization will result in improved services and programs, an enhancement in the efficiency and economical operations of the district or districts, and an increase in the value of the district or districts, and an increase in the value of the district sa assets to the residents of the communities and territories they serve. As required by Chapter 275 of the Code of Iowa, Northwest AEA "shall, insofar as possible, authorize submission of proposals to the electors as they are developed and approved."

#### B. Petition and boundary line principles.

When acting upon reorganization petitions that may be presented to it, the area education agency board shall consider the following principles. These tenets are not stated in order of importance, and other factors may be considered.

- 1. The Northwest AEA board encouraged the local boards of directors to:
  - thoroughly study the reorganization conditions before submitting a proposal to the AEA;
  - involve the community in the study and decision making process through the formation of citizens committees, open forums for the purpose of disseminating information, and group and personal contacts for obtaining citizen input and
  - explore all options connected with the possible reorganization.

- 2. Reorganization studies and surveys shall be comprehensive, and they shall help determine whether the proposed district:
  - will have reasonable long-term stability;
  - will be able to comfortably meet the minimum educational standards required by the State of Iowa;
  - will be able to operate in an economical and efficient manner;
  - will have adequate facilities for the combined student body or have a plan for the development of adequate facilities;
  - will form a reasonable geographic entity considering the outline of the territory, and the locations of the students, the municipalities, and the school structures;
  - has demonstrated the compatibility of the existing individual units through sharing agreements and other forms of cooperation; and
  - will satisfy the "matters" expressed in Iowa Code section 275.2, 2011.
- 3. When acting upon objections that request property to be removed from a proposed reorganization, the area education agency board will adhere to the mandates of Iowa Code section 275.14, unnumbered paragraph 2, 2011. As it rules upon the exclusion of territory, the decisions of the board, "shall represent a balance between the rights of the objectors and the welfare of the reorganized district."

The Northwest AEA board of directors recognizes that each reorganization petition situation is unique. At the deliberation upon the petition, the board will first examine the petition according to the principles established in this plan. However, the board reserves the right to add to those principles or detract from them as is warranted by each circumstance.

#### C. Suggested alternate plans.

At of the date of the approval of this plan, there are three districts in Northwest AEA that have a certified enrollment of less than 300 students. There are three major reorganization options suggested as alternate plans for these districts:

- 1) Reorganization with one or more contiguous school districts.
- 2) Dissolution of the district, with territory being attached to two or more of the contiguous districts;
- 3) Reorganization with one or more contiguous school districts, with territory being excluded, for later inclusion in another contiguous school district.
  - 1. Whiting (Certified Enrollment of 183, September 2011) If the district were to consider reorganizing, Northwest AEA suggests it reorganize with a contiguous district or districts.
  - 2. Aurelia (Certified Enrollment of 258, September 2011)
    If the district were to consider reorganizing, Northwest AEA suggests it reorganize with a contiguous district or districts.
  - 3. Ar-We-Va (Certified Enrollment of 291, September 2011) If the district were to consider reorganizing, Northwest AEA suggests it reorganize with a contiguous district or districts.

#### **SUMMARY**

Petitions filed by any of the above listed district, by other districts in Northwest AEA, or by a district in Northwest AEA jointly with a district in a contiguous area education agency, shall be presented and written in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Iowa. If necessary, such petition shall request a change in the AEA's reorganization plan, and the request will be considered at the hearing on the petition.

It is important to restate that the Northwest AEA board of directors has neither the authority nor the interest to force school district reorganization or dissolution.

## Table 3-04

## **Projected Enrollments**